

Congresswoman NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ

Representing New York's 12th Congressional District
Ranking Democrat, House Small Business Committee



Velázquez Fights to Hire Public Housing Residents Bill to require more tenants hired on big construction jobs

Congresswoman Velázquez held a press conference June 12 to announce the introduction of a bill that would tighten existing federal legislation governing the hiring of public housing residents in federally funded construction projects in housing developments. Velázquez was joined by public housing residents, Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES),



Congresswoman Velázquez discusses her bill requiring construction contracts in public housing to hire more of their residents.

Public Housing Residents of the Lower East Side (PHROLES), construction unions, and local elected officials.

Congresswoman Velázquez said that under her bill, Section 3 of the federal housing law would be amended so that 30% of all labor costs on contracts worth \$500,000 or more will be set aside for hiring eligible residents. And contractors who meet Section 3 goals will receive favorable consideration on future contract bids.

Velázquez's bill will also require housing authorities and contractors to work together to provide better outreach and placement of interested housing tenants.

Because the current law is seen as lacking in training opportunities for tenant employment, the Congresswoman's bill will also improve existing worker-training programs.

The Congresswoman called on NYCHA and HUD to work with the groups assembled to make the Section 3 program a success.

Hispanic Caucus Investigates Vieques Mistreatment Members decry rubber bullets use, protester beatings

Last month, Congresswoman Velázquez joined in efforts with the office of Puerto Rico's Resident Commissioner Acevedo Vilá and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus to shed light on the mistreatment of protestors detained by the United States Navy on the Puerto Rican Island of Vieques in late April.

"A year ago when I joined the protest in Vieques I saw the same injustice," Velázquez said. "Once again, the Navy chose to behave like a world-class bully."

In light of the Navy's resumption of its military practices in April, an array of Puerto Rican and U.S. political, community, religious and environmental leaders decided to undertake a demonstration of civil disobedience.

According to representatives of the Puerto Rican Senate, members of the Navy military police indiscriminately fired rubber bullets at protestors located outside Navy compounds and protestors were kicked on the ground after they had been immobilized and handcuffed.

"The Navy displayed a total disregard for human well-being by applying brutal force against its own citizens. These actions have absolutely no place in a democratic society," the Congresswoman said.

Last month, the Administration announced the Navy would leave Vieques in two years.

IKEA Big-Box Store Drops Gowanus Post Office Site

Environmental, health impact study aided local opposition



Congresswoman Velázquez meets with IKEA opponents in June.

After Congresswoman Velázquez and Community Consulting Services, Inc., released a damaging study on the environmental and health impacts of an IKEA big-box store on the Gowanus Canal, the Swedish furniture retailer decided to drop its plan for a new outlet.

While this step is a victory for local community groups and residents, Velázquez insists that any disposition of the land by the U.S. Postal Service should be preceded by a proper Environmental Impact Statement and consultation with the community as to who will develop the site.

"It's not that we are opposed to economic development, but it must be appropriate and the community must be consulted. A big-box store isn't appropriate for this site, sandwiched between local residents and the canal. We all want to see some kind of economic development, but we must strike a balance," Velázquez said.

Cobble Hill Health Center Celebrates 25 Years

'Original' nursing home now among City's finest facilities

Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez joined Cobble Hill Health Center residents and staff members to celebrate the Center's Silver Jubilee. The original Nursing Home, founded in 1976, was involved in the nursing home scandals of the '70s and almost closed before it was saved by a dedicated team, which included members of the community. Eventually it would become one of the best in the City.

The Congresswoman congratulated the Center for providing vital services to the area's elderly and their families. She also discussed the Patients' Bill of Rights, which is currently being debated in Congress. She urged constituents to send letters to Congress to demand that prescription drugs be included as a component of the bill.

"I will be there to ensure that we have some sanity in healthcare," Velázquez promised the group assembled.



Congresswoman Velázquez celebrates Cobble Hill's first 25 years.

Velázquez Visits Red Hook & Carroll Gardens Schools

Centers received \$2.5 million in federal education grants



Congresswoman Velázquez meets P.S. 27 students in Red Hook.

Congresswoman Velázquez visited two schools in her district: M.S. 142 in Carroll Gardens and P.S. 27 in Red Hook. At M.S. 142, the Congresswoman met with the directors, parents and students of the Community School and the Harbor School, which are currently housed in the same building but which will be merging next year. They discussed the school's needs and several education bills recently introduced by Velázquez in Congress.

M.S. 142 is one of four centers designated as part of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant for next year. This is the second year in a row that Congresswoman Velázquez has helped secure the grant for a School District #15 school. The 21st Century grant, comprising three-year projects totaling almost \$2.5

million, was secured last year for elementary school centers, while this year the grant was for middle schools.

At P.S. 27 in Red Hook, the Congresswoman met with the staff, students, and teachers of the School for Leadership in the Environment. Velázquez listened while they expressed the particular needs for schools in low-income communities, especially to have fully funded Pre-Kindergarten programs. Nearby is P.S. 15, which was also awarded a 21st Century Community Learning Center grant.